

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 00974 172136Z
ACTION IO-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 0974

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: IO UNGA ASEC SF CU
SUBJ: CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT GOING TO UN FOR NAMIBIA SESSION

1. SUMMARY: CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT ALMEIDA WILL BE GOING TO NEW YORK FOR UN SESSION ON NAMIBIA. WE RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG RECEIVE ALMEIDA, AND THAT APPROPRIATE PROTOCOLARY AND SECURITY MEASURES BE UNDERTAKEN. END SUMMARY

2. GRANMA, APRIL 17, ANNOUNCES THAT CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT (AND POLITUBURO MEMBER) JUAN ALMEIDA BOSQUE WILL BE TRAVELING TO NEW YORK TO HEAD CUBAN DELEGATION AT UNGA SPECIAL SESSION ON NAMIBIA. (VISA MESSAGE WILL BE FORWARDED BY SEPTEL).

3. ALMEIDA IS HIGHEST-RANKING BLACK IN CUBAN LEADERSHIP (AND HIGHEST RANKING CUBAN TO VISIT UN SINCE CHE GUEVARA IN 1964) AND AS SUCH HE SERVES AS SYMBOL OF CUBA'S LINK WITH THIRD WORLD. (FYI HE IS CHAIRMAN OF CUBAN COMMITTEE TO PREPARE FOR 1979 HAVANA NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT). ALMEIDA'S PRESENCE AT NAMIBIA DISCUSSION IS PRESUMABLY CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HAVANA 00974 172136Z

MEANT TO SERVE AS DEMONSTRATION OF CUBA'S COMMITMENT TO ERADICATION OF WHITE MINORITY RULE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ITS WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE POLITICAL, NOT JUST MILITARY, APPROACH TO PROBLEMS IN AFRICA. ALMEIDA'S VISIT, THEREFORE, MAY BE INTENDED AS RESPONSE TO RECENT WIDESPREAD CRITICISM OF CUBAN MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. VISIT, OF COURSE, IS ALSO INTENDED, AT LEAST SYMBOLICALLY, TO

DIMINISH SEEMING WESTERN FIVE MONOPOLY OVER NAMIBIA NEGOTIATIONS.

4. WHILE ALMEIDA IS PURPORTEDLY SOMEWHAT OF A LIGHT-WEIGHT (HE SUPERVISES ORIENTE REGION AND RESIDES IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA AND, THEREFORE, PROBABLY DOES NOT FIGURE IN DAY-TO-DAY HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DELIBERATIONS), THE IMPORTANCE OF HIS MISSION AND HIS PERSONAL RANK CONSEL MORE THAN USUAL ATTENTION TO HIM ON PART OF US. WE RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG (AND OTHER USG OFFICIALS AS APPROPRIATE) CONTACT HIM AND THAT HE BE GIVEN APPROPRIATE PROTOCOLARY HONORS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, EXTENSIVE SECURITY PROTECTION FOR ALMEIDA WILL BE REQUIRED.

5. COMMENT: ALMEIDA'S PRESENCE AT NAMIBIA SESSION MIGHT OFFER POSSIBILITY TO LINK IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO CUBAN TROOP DRAWDOWN IN ANGOLA.

6. FIDEL CASTRO'S RECENT QUESTIONING OF CODEL DIGGS ON MODALITIES OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S TRAVEL TO AFRICA RAISES INTERESTING QUESTION WHETHER CASTRO MAY BE USING ALMEIDA VISIT AS TRIAL BALLON BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER HE (CASTRO) HIMSELF, SHOULD VISIT US FOR UNGA IN FALL. NOTE THAT OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB HAS ALREADY ISSUED CASTRO AN INVITATION TO SPEAK IN WASHINGTON SHOULD HE DECIDE TO COME TO U.S., ALTHOUGH CASTRO HIMSELF HAS RECOGNIZED PROBABLE DELICACY OF ACCEPTING SUCH AN INVITATION.

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PAGE 03 HAVANA 00974 172136Z

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